

From IEMA Director James K. Joseph

Near the beginning of his annual State of the State speech in late January, Governor Bruce Rauner recognized emergency managers and public safety officials throughout Illinois by saying:

"This past year, we've seen major storms, deadly tornadoes and, recently, record flooding. In every instance, our emergency management team has been there with timely assistance, working hand-in-hand with the impacted communities and local officials. I am constantly in awe of the way our communities come together in times of trouble. This spirit of Illinois is what inspires me every day. ...For the work you and all our first responders and emergency personnel do, please accept our deepest appreciation."

I, too, am in awe of the dedication demonstrated by our public safety partners in response to and recovery from the many disasters we've faced during the past year. It was just over a year ago that I became IEMA director, and in that year my appreciation and respect for public servants devoted to protecting the public have deepened immeasurably.

While we continue to deal with issues related to the December floods, IEMA staff members continue to tackle other challenges, some of which are highlighted in this issue of Inside IEMA. The article about the state's continuing efforts to remove properties from flood-prone areas is particularly timely. Without this more than 20-year effort, it's estimated that as many as 2,700 additional homes and structures would have been impacted during the recent flooding.

And speaking of flooding, we're ramping up efforts to promote severe weather preparedness throughout March. With 14 flood-related deaths in 2015 – more than any year since records have been kept – it's particularly important that we continue to educate our residents to "Turn Around, Don't Drown" on flooded roads.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. As always, please contact me with any comments or questions.



In this issue

Flood Damage Assessments	2
Mitigation Reduces Flood Impacts	3
IEMA Lab Excels in National Test.....	4
Comments Sought on PA Proposal	4
Severe Weather Preparedness	5
Unmanned Aerial Device Task Force	5
Starcom 21 Update	6
Radon Poster Contest	6
New Dosimeters Distributed	7
Employee of the Quarter	7
RSS Feed Available	8
IEMA Job Postings	8

IEMA, FEMA, SBA Conduct Flood Damage Assessments

In early February, public and individual assistance assessment teams staffed by IEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Small Business Administration fanned out to nearly two dozen counties affected by the late December flooding and severe storms to conduct joint Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs).

Teams reviewing storm-related costs incurred by local governments began meeting with local officials on Feb. 1 in Alexander, Bureau, Calhoun, Cass, Cumberland, Iroquois, Jackson, Jersey, Madison, Marion, Mason, Menard, Monroe, Morgan, Moultrie, Pike, Randolph, St. Clair and Vermilion counties.

Assessments of damages to homes and businesses began Feb. 4 in Alexander, Christian, Clinton, Douglas, Iroquois, Jersey, Madison, Randolph, Sangamon and St. Clair counties.

While the original deadline to request federal assistance for this event was Feb. 12, the state requested and received a deadline extension. The state now has until Feb. 26 to thoroughly review information collected by the PDA teams and determine if a request for federal assistance is warranted.

Response and recovery costs and numbers of structures damaged as a result of the severe storms and flooding are critical components for the determination of eligibility for federal assistance.



Don Kauerauf of IEMA checks for flood damage at a house in Kincaid as part of the joint damage assessments conducted with FEMA and the SBA. Also pictured are Tolly Knezevich of IEMA and Scott Richardson of FEMA.

However, IEMA also is reviewing other disaster-related impact information that could impede a community's ability to recover, including displacement of residents, the economic effects of road closures on businesses and workers, and concerns in areas that have been hit by floods twice in less than a year.

There are two types of federal assistance the state could request: Individual Assistance, which would provide grants and low-interest loans to people affected by the disaster, and Public Assistance, which would enable local governments to recoup some of their disaster-related expenses.



SAVE THE DATE!

**September 6-8, 2016
Prairie Capitol Convention Center
Springfield, IL**

State's Investment in Mitigation Reduces Flood Impacts

With one of the largest inland systems of rivers, lakes and streams in the U.S., Illinois is no stranger to flooding. In fact, nearly 15 percent of the state's total land area (7,400 square miles) is subject to flooding. Historically, more than 90 percent of federally declared disasters in Illinois are the result of flooding.

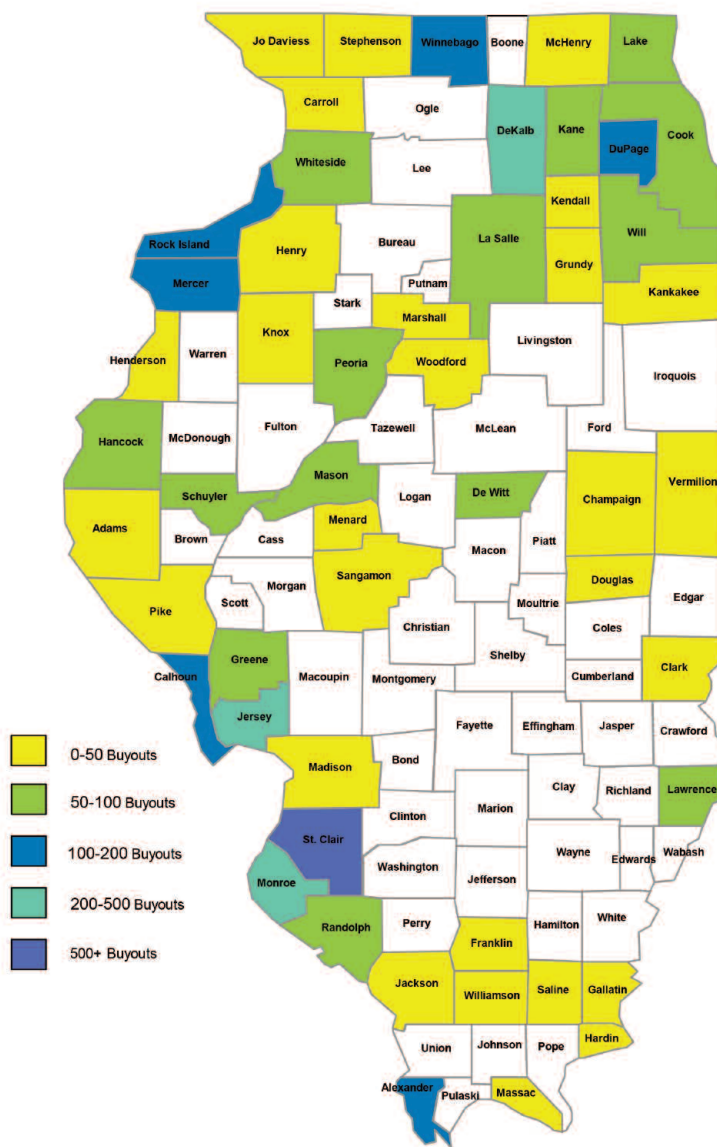
For more than two decades, IEMA has worked to reduce the state's flood vulnerability by investing a large percentage of federal funding through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program into property acquisitions and elevations of structures in frequently flooded areas. The state receives HMGP funds following a federally declared disaster.

More than 4,300 properties in 52 counties have been purchased since the mid-1990s, when federal funds became available for these proactive measures. After the Great Flood of 1993, Illinois emerged as a leader in acquiring flood damaged structures, essentially writing the procedures that the rest of the states later adopted.

As early as the 1970s, Illinois demonstrated leadership in flood mitigation. Following the Illinois River flood of 1973, the state initiated a large property buyout in the village of Kampsville.

These proactive measures break the cycle of construction-destruction-reconstruction by providing

IEMA Hazard Mitigation Buyout Program County Participants



homeowners an opportunity to voluntarily move out of harm's way. Deed restrictions are then placed on the properties to prevent future structures on those lots.

The acquisition of flood-prone structures works hand-in-hand with rigorous enforcement of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) regulations that prevent structures from being constructed at elevations that can potentially flood. Thanks to the longstanding diligence of staff in the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Office of Water Resources and local zoning officers, Illinois is a national leader for preventing new structures from being constructed contrary to the NFIP regulations.

Property acquisitions are a win-win for many groups. Homeowners are paid pre-flood fair market value, which allows them to move to higher ground and avoid the stress of repetitive flooding.

Communities save time and money previously spent on flood fights and can transform the now vacant lots into a park or recreational area. It's estimated that 2,700 additional homes and structures would have been impacted during the recent flooding if not for the state's long-standing efforts to remove properties from floodplains.

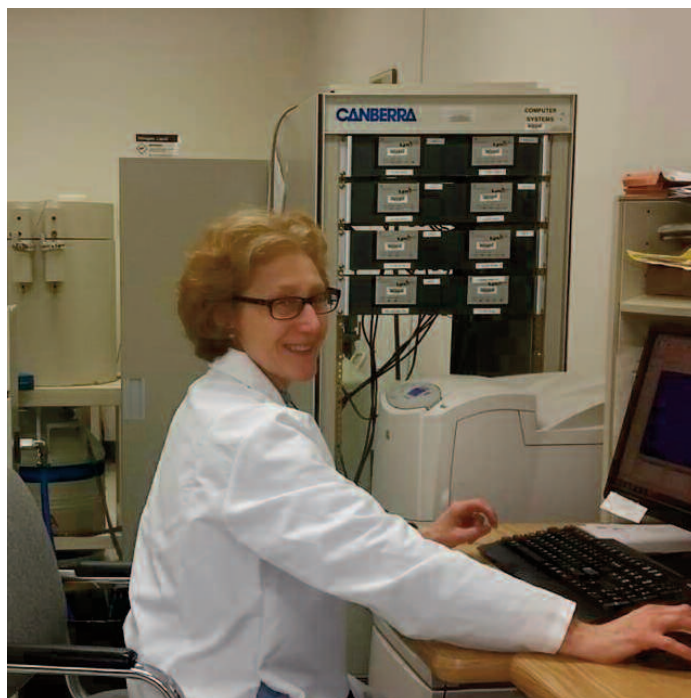
Radiochemistry Lab Excels in National Food Test

IEMA's radiochemistry laboratory was recognized as a top performer in a recent proficiency test conducted by the Food Emergency Response Network (FERN).

FERN is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The program integrates the nation's food-testing laboratories at the local, state and federal levels. The network is capable of responding to emergencies involving biological, chemical or radiological contamination of consumer foods in the U.S.

In December, the radiochemistry laboratory received three food samples, including lettuce, beef and cheese, from FERN. Known amounts of radioactive material had been added to all three samples. The purpose of the FERN proficiency test was for participants to properly identify all radioactive materials present along with the concentration levels of each.

IEMA's testing consisted of sample preparation, measurement by radiation detection instrumentation, and assessment and analysis by our laboratory team. IEMA's lab correctly identified all radionuclides present in the food samples and accurately measured the concentration of each to within 10 percent of the known values.



IEMA Radiochemistry Laboratory Director Melanie Caspary performs final review of data before releasing results for distribution.

The laboratory's performance was one of the top two performers of the 25 federal and state radiochemistry laboratories from across the country that participated in the FERN study.

Comments Sought on FEMA Disaster Deductible Concept

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is considering establishing a disaster deductible, requiring a predetermined level of financial or other commitment from a grant recipient (state), before it will provide assistance under the Public Assistance Program when authorized by a Presidential major disaster declaration.

FEMA believes the deductible model would incentivize grant recipients to make meaningful improvements in disaster planning, fiscal capacity for disaster response and recovery, and risk mitigation, while contributing to more effective stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

For example, grant recipients could potentially receive credit toward their deductible requirement through proactive pre-event actions such as adopting enhanced building codes, establishing and maintaining a disaster relief fund or self-insurance

plan, or adoption of other measures that reduce the recipient's risk from disaster events.

This proposal could impact local governments and other entities that would be eligible to receive federal assistance through the Public Assistance Program following a federally declared disaster.

To learn more about FEMA's proposal, please review the [fact sheet at
http://www.ccao.org/userfiles/Fact%20Sheet%20-%20ANPRM%20Deductible%20-%20Jan%206%202016%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ccao.org/userfiles/Fact%20Sheet%20-%20ANPRM%20Deductible%20-%20Jan%206%202016%20(1).pdf). In addition, the Federal Register notice for this proposed rulemaking can be viewed at http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FEMA_FRDOC_0001-4874. Directions on how to submit comments are also available on the Federal Register notice. Comments are due by March 21.

It's Time to Prepare for Severe Weather

With spring just around the corner, it's time once again for people in Illinois to prepare for severe thunderstorms, flooding and tornadoes, which become more likely as temperatures begin to rise.

IEMA dedicates the month of March to promoting severe weather preparedness in Illinois. Once again this year, IEMA is joining with the Illinois Emergency Services Management Agency to highlight the importance of weather alert radios with the "Weather Alert Radios Save Lives" contest.

The online contest encourages people to learn more about weather alert radios for a chance to win a radio. The contest will run Feb. 28 to March 31 and 100 winners will be randomly selected from people who successfully complete a short quiz. The contest will be available beginning Feb. 28 at www.Ready.Illinois.gov.

At 10 a.m. on Tuesday, March 1, the National Weather Service will issue a "live" Tornado Warning (Emergency Alert System (EAS) code TOR) for the annual statewide tornado exercise. The message will be disseminated with the "TOR" EAS code through the NOAA Weather Radio network for input into the EAS equipment at broadcast outlets throughout the state.

The test warning was made possible by a one-time waiver from the Federal Communications Commission



Weather radios like the one pictured here will be awarded to 100 participants in the 2016 "Weather Alert Radios Save Lives" contest.

of their EAS rules. The "live" tornado warning will specify several times throughout the message that it is a test to avoid confusion by the public. If actual severe weather is imminent or occurring at the time of the test, the exercise will be postponed until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 2.

IEMA's updated Severe Weather Preparedness Guide is now available on the Ready Illinois website at www.Ready.Illinois.gov. The guide can be printed and distributed to groups and individuals in your area or linked to from your website.

Illinois Unmanned Aerial System Oversight Task Force

The Illinois Unmanned Aerial System Oversight Task Force was created by legislation signed by Gov. Bruce Rauner in August 2015. The legislation was necessary because of the increased use of unmanned aerial systems or drone technologies by for-profit companies, law enforcement, hobbyists and non-law enforcement public safety users, along with the lack of clear guidelines for the safe operations of the devices in Illinois.

Don Kauerauf, chief of the Bureau of Preparedness and Grant Administration, was appointed by Director Joseph to the task force.

The task force is charged with providing oversight and input in creating comprehensive laws and rules for the operation and use of drone technology within the

state, in accordance with federal rules and regulations. Over the next several months, the task force will consider commercial and private use of drones, landowner and privacy rights, and general rules and regulations for safe operations of drones. By July 1, 2016, the task force will be responsible for providing the Governor with a comprehensive report on recommendations for the safe and lawful operation of unmanned aerial systems in the state.

This topic is important to many emergency management and public safety officials. If you have any questions or recommendations for the task force, please contact Don Kauerauf at 217-557-4831 or by email at don.kauerauf@illinois.gov.

Illinois Student Takes Third Place in National Contest

A poster submitted by Ally Abel, a student at Byron Middle School in Byron, recently won third place in the 2016 National Radon Poster Contest.

Abel's poster was one of three entries submitted to the national contest by IEMA and the American Lung Association in Illinois (ALAIL), which sponsor the state-level contest each year. She will receive \$200 for her third-place finish in the national contest.

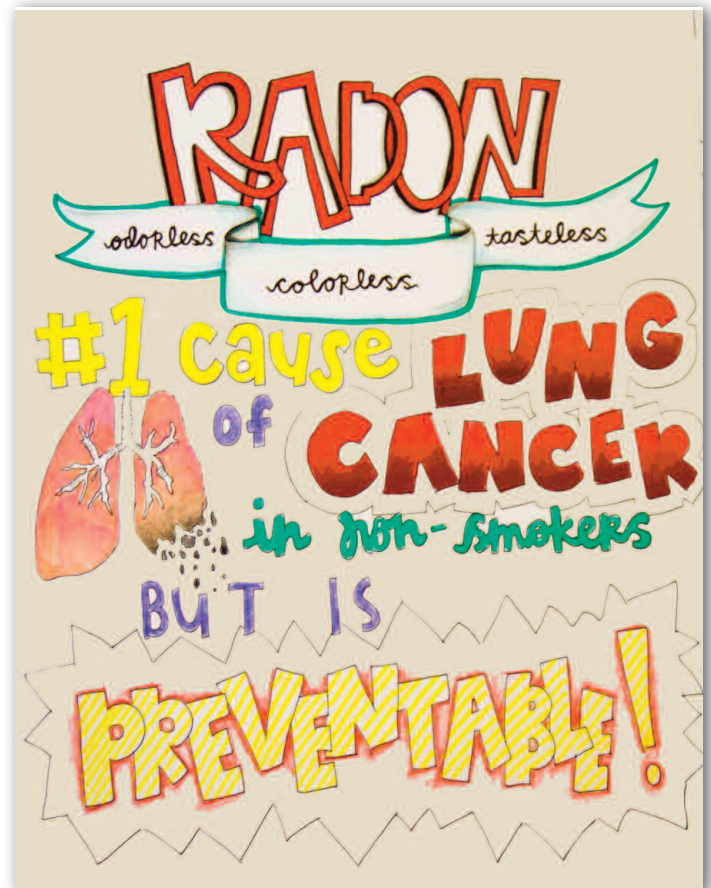
The National Radon Poster Contest helps raise awareness of radon, a naturally occurring radioactive gas that causes 21,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the U.S., up to 1,200 of those in Illinois.

Information about radon is available on IEMA's radon webpage at www.radon.illinois.gov.

Entries are now being accepted for this year's radon poster and video contests.

The Illinois Radon Poster Contest is open to students ages 9-14. Entries are due by March 1. Information about the poster contest available at http://healthhouse.org/radon/il_poster.cfm.

High school students can compete for prizes by producing creative 60-second YouTube videos about radon for the High School Radon Video Contest. Videos can be created by an individual student, group of students or classroom. Entries are due by March 8.



Contest details are available at www.healthhouse.org/radon/il_vidcontest.cfm.

Winners from the 2015 contests can be viewed at www.radon.illinois.gov.

Public Safety Starcom21 Radio License Contract Extended

In 2004, in response to findings of the 9/11 Commission, IEMA established a program to purchase Starcom21 radios for state and local public safety to ensure essential, multi-disciplinary communications could be achieved during an emergency. The Starcom21 units provided to public safety allowed communities to access a single interoperable system to achieve strategic communications.

The number of these units used by public safety has decreased. Therefore, as of April 1, 2016, the number of licenses paid for with federal preparedness funds will decrease from 3,800 to 2,500. This includes equipment for mutual aid managed cache radios, units utilized by the state mobile support teams, and radios that are utilized by public safety access points

(PSAPs) and other communications centers to ensure coverage in every county in Illinois.

The goal is to ensure every county will have, at a minimum, a unit in their PSAP and county command center/coordination point, as outlined in their Tactical Communications Interoperability Plan. Jurisdictions possessing a Starcom21 radio that won't be covered through the agreement will have the option of keeping the unit at their expense or returning it for inclusion in a statewide Starcom21 radio cache available for all public safety in Illinois.

Questions about this program should be directed to Russ Gentry at the Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System at 618-973-0139 or rlgentry@ileas.org.

New Dosimeters Will Protect Emergency Workers

New direct reading dosimeters (DRDs) currently being distributed by IEMA will provide greater protection for emergency workers who may be exposed to radiation while responding to a nuclear power plant accident.

The new DRDs measure exposures at a lower range than previous DRDs, which prevented accurate readings at the low end of the range. Exposures associated with a nuclear power plant incident response would likely be within the lower range.

IEMA staff are distributing the new dosimeters and providing training on their use to more than 200 dosimetry control officers in the areas around the six nuclear power plants in Illinois.

IEMA performed an analysis on the procedure state health physicists use to monitor the type of release and ensure exposure limits are suitable for emergency worker protection. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Protective Action Guide recommends limiting the total dose for emergency workers to 5 rem. This limit applies to the total of internal and external dose.

This dose is minimized by providing emergency workers with DRDs that measure external exposure and providing administrative limits based on the observed readings. However, the DRDs do not measure the internal exposure from inhalation of airborne radioactive material. Therefore, the administrative limit is dependent on an assumed conversion factor between external exposure and total dose and can change depending on the type of release that is occurring.

IEMA's analysis determined that previous assumptions did not consider incidents where there would be a high internal exposure. During such an incident, it would have been impossible to change the administrative limit to an acceptable value because of the range of the dosimeter.

The agency's decision to provide emergency workers with new dosimeters allows the adoption of lower administrative limits. This will decrease the possibility that an emergency worker would exceed the EPA Protective Action Guide recommendations.

Acquisition of the 9,000 dosimeters was made possible by funding from Exelon, which operates the 11 commercial nuclear reactors at six sites in Illinois.



IEMA is providing dosimeters like the one shown here to more than 200 dosimetry control officers around the six nuclear power plants in the state.



Employee of the Quarter

Katelyn Hoke, a chemist in IEMA's Radiochemistry Laboratory, was recognized recently as IEMA's Employee of Quarter for the fourth quarter of 2015. Hoke was nominated by fellow employees, who noted her outstanding capabilities in the radiochemistry laboratory along with her professionalism and initiative. She joined IEMA in March 2014.

IEMA Press Releases Available Through RSS Feed

A new feature on IEMA's website enables you to receive the latest news from IEMA as soon as it is posted. You can subscribe to the RSS feed for IEMA press releases at <http://www.illinois.gov/iema/Info/Pages/PressReleases.aspx>.

You will need a third-party RSS reader/aggregator software. There are many options to choose from

ranging from web-based to mobile apps. If you are using Microsoft Exchange, you can simply right click on the "RSS Feeds" folder and select "Add a new RSS Feed," then insert the address of the RSS feed.

Some browsers will have a "subscribe" link at the top of the page automatically. Clicking this link will add the subscription to a "Feeds" section of your browser's favorites or bookmarks.

Applicants Sought for Operations Chief, Internal Auditor

IEMA currently is taking applications for two key positions: Chief of Operations and Chief Internal Auditor. Both positions are located in Springfield.

The Chief of Operations oversees the agency's eight regional offices, training and exercise programs, the State Emergency Operations Center and coordination of the state's response to disasters anywhere in Illinois.

The Chief Internal Auditor conducts audits of the agency's programs to ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations and works with the agency audit committee on audit recommendations and findings.

For more information about the Chief of Operations position, see the posting at http://agency.governmentjobs.com/illinois/job_bulletin.cfm?JobID=1328708&sharedWindow=1.

Information about the Chief Internal Auditor position is available at http://agency.governmentjobs.com/illinois/job_bulletin.cfm?JobID=1316409&sharedWindow=1.



Did you Know....

Straight-line winds and downbursts can cause more damage than nearly 75 percent of the tornadoes that occur in Illinois.



Information about the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's 2016 Urban Areas Security Initiative – Nonprofit Security Grant Program is available at <http://www.illinois.gov/iema/ITTF/Pages/default.aspx>. The Illinois UASI includes Chicago and Cook County. Applications from eligible 501c(3) organizations who are deemed at high risk of a potential terrorist attack have until 11:59 p.m. CDT on April 4, 2016, to apply.



State of Illinois
Illinois Emergency Management Agency

For more information on this newsletter, contact:

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